

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 15953 210604Z

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 CU-02 /059 W

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R 210540Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4382

INFO AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 15953

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, TH

SUBJ: COUNTER-INSURGENCY OPERATION IN MAE HONG SON AND CHIANG MAI

SUMMARY: CONSUL CHIANG MAI REPORTS THAT A JOINT BPP-ISOC COUNTER-INSURGENCY OPERATION ALONG THE PROVINCIAL BORDERS BETWEEN CHIANG MAI AND MAE HONG SON HAS NETTED THREE SUSPECTED COMMUNIST RECRUITERS. RTG SECURITY OFFICIALS AND THE THAI PRESS INITIALLY INDICATED THE SUSPECTS WERE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS. HOWEVER, CONSUL CHIANG MAI REPORTS THAT IF THOSE ARRESTED WERE IN FACT ENGAGED IN A COMMUNIST RECRUITMENT PROGRAM, THEY WERE PROBABLY LONGTIME CADRE WHO HAD PREPARED FOR THIS KIND OF WORK PRIOR TO THE EVENTS OF OCTOBER 6. END SUMMARY.

1. ACCORDING TO REPORTS FROM CONSULATE CHIANG MAI, THE RTG LAUNCHED A JOINT BPP-ISOC COUNTER-INSURGENCY CAMPAIGN JULY 9 DESIGNED TO FLUSH OUT INSURGENTS IN SIX VILLAGES IN MAE CHAEM DISTRICT AND IN MAE LA NOI AND MAE SARIANG DISTRICTS OF MAE HONG SON PROVINCE. THE OPERATION APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN, IN PART, A TRAINING EXERCISE FOR NEW BPP PERSONNEL, GIVING THEM AN OPPORTUNITY TO WORK IN A RELATIVELY LOW RISK AREA. HOWEVER, THE OPERATION
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BANGKO 15953 210604Z

HAS RESULTED IN THE CAPTURE OF AT LEAST THREE ALLEGED COMMUNIST RECRUITERS.

2. THAI PRESS REPORTS LABELED THE THREE SUSPECTS AS STUDENTS. HOWEVER, CONSULATE CHIANG MAI SAYS THAT, OF THE THREE MEN NOW UNDER INVESTIGATION, ONE HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED AS A GRADUATE OF

CHIANG MAI TECHNICAL COLLEGE WHILE THE OTHER TWO APPARENTLY HAVE HAD NO FORMAL HIGHER EDUCATION.

3. CONSUL CHIANG MAI REPORTS THAT RTG SECURITY OFFICIALS IN THE CHIANG MAI-MAE HONG SON AREA HAVE READILY ACCEPTED THE NOTION THAT UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WHO FLED FROM THE CAMPUSES FOLLOWING THE EVENTS OF OCTOBER 6 ARE ENGAGED IN RECRUITMENT ACTIVITIES ON BEHALF OF THE CPT. TO SUPPORT THIS THEORY THAI AUTHORITIES TEND, INCREASINGLY, TO DESCRIBE AS A STUDENT ANY COMMUNIST ACTIVIST WHOSE AGE BRINGS HIM INTO THE RANGE OF SOMEONE STUDYING AT THE UNIVERSITY LEVEL.

4. CONSUL CHIANG MAI COMMENTS THAT IN THE ABSENCE OF HARD EVIDENCE, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS OF FORMER UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ARE PRESENTLY ENGAGED IN COMMUNIST RECRUITMENT ACTIVITY IN THE CHIANG MAI-MAE HONG SON AREA. ACCORDING TO CONSUL CHIANG MAI, THE THREE MEN RECENTLY ARRESTED FOR SUSPECTED COMMUNIST RECRUITMENT ACTIVITIES WERE, IN ALL LIKELIHOOD, VETERAN CADRE WHO HAD BEEN TRAINED AS RECRUITS LONG BEFORE

OCTOBER 6. EMBASSY CONCURS THAT THERE IS, AS YET, INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE TO CONCLUDE THAT THE CPT IS ENTRUSTING THE IMPORTANT JOB OF RECRUITING RURAL VILLAGERS TO EX-UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WHO ARE NEW TO THE RIGORS OF JUNGLE LIFE.
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